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ABSTRACT

This project serves as a followup to an earlier report (J. Nichols, W. Ludwin, and P. Iadicola, in press) in which the student discipline and suspension data for a large urban school corporation in the Midwest were explored. In the earlier project, flawed data collection procedures by the school corporation made analysis of the data tentative and problematic. As a result, new data collection procedures were implemented the following year. This project explores the "following year" data and expands the analysis to include data from 6 high schools, 11 middle schools, and 35 elementary schools. Analysis of the student discipline data is presented with a discussion centering around overrepresentation of minority and low-income students within the data. In addition, this project includes a discipline consequence and zone analysis of behavioral occurrences. Implications for future research are also discussed. (Contains 11 tables and 32 references.) (Author/SLD)

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An Exploration of Discipline and Suspension Data

Since the inception of the Gallop Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools in 1969, classroom management and school discipline issues have been the public's primary educational concern on 16 occasions. It is clear that poor student behavior impedes learning and student achievement, and sets the stage for an ineffective educational environment and community. The seventh goal of the National Educational Goals states that by the year 2000, "all schools in America will be free from drugs and violence and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol, and offer a disciplined environment that is conducive to learning." To accomplish this goal, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 provides for support of drug and violence prevention programs. Additionally, this act includes an impact evaluation component, which contains a provision that requires the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) to collect data to determine the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of student misbehavior and violence in elementary and secondary schools. Although on a national level these efforts may be seen as promising in their effort to improve the educational environment, locally many schools are making more tangible efforts in support of programs and documentation to address these issues. In addition, discussion in educational circles continues to center around the fair and appropriate distribution of discipline consequences to all students. In addition to these efforts, discussion continues to center around the disproportionate number of misbehavior incidents among minority students. Included in these discussions are the possible disparity of discipline

consequences that may occur among ethnic majority and minority offenders and their designated economic status in the public school setting.

Literature Review

It may never be feasible to compile a list of all possible factors that precipitate student misbehavior in the classroom with an even greater task to address the variety of techniques and consequences that may be implemented as possible solutions to problem behavior. Mansfield (1991) observed that 44% of teachers nationwide reported that student misbehavior interfered substantially with their attempts to teach their material on a daily basis. In a recent meta-analysis of factors influencing student learning, teachers' skills in their ability to manage student behavior were identified as the most important factor (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). In a 1987 study for the Center of Educational Statistics, 44% of public school teachers reported more disruptive classroom behavior in their schools than five years earlier. Although programs similar to Gateway (Davis, 1994), Central Park East (Scherer, 1994) and ALPHA (Abbott, 1994) offer unique organizational and curricular structures in their attempt to effectively address "at-risk" students in danger of school failure and/or those with multiple misbehavior or discipline incidences, limited empirical evidence exists to suggest program effectiveness.

Although effective special programs may be defined in terms of improved student attendance (Gettys & Wheelock, 1994), decreased discipline problems (Davis,1994) academic progress (Alscher & Myers, 1994) and eventual employment in the community (Meixner, 1994), local on-site discipline and consequence issues are at the forefront of educational research and dialogue among educational practitioners. While classroom

management and student discipline is a clear concern of teachers, parents, and local communities, the effectiveness of strategies such as in-school and out-of-school suspension and expulsion of students continue to be a topic of great debate. One concern is that no clear evidence exists to suggest that in-school or out-of-school suspension serves as a deterrent to future student misbehavior. Although the notion of providing a disciplinary consequence like in-school suspension may be seen as positive as it supposedly provides an avenue of discipline without disrupting the educational process, questions regarding the students' effective re-integration back into the regular classroom remain an issue when in-school and out-of-school suspension occurs.

Several researchers suggest that out-of-school suspension may be linked to several negative educational outcomes including continued academic failure, grade retention, negative school attitudes, and increased drop-out rates (Oppenheimer & Ziegler, 1988). Suspending students for truancy may actually have the unintended effect of increasing rather than decreasing truancy (Massachusetts Board of Education, 1991). In addition, students with multiple out-of-school suspensions tend to participate in fewer extracurricular activities, are more than likely to placed in special education programs, receive poorer grades on average and have poorer school attendance than do one-time suspendees or students who have never been suspended (Oppenheimer & Ziegler, 1988). A growing number of educational researchers maintain that out-of-school suspension is strongly linked to school failure, nonpromotion, continued disciplinary problems, and may contribute to delinquent behavior in the community (Alpert & Dunham, 1986; Oppenheimer & Ziegler, 1988). The majority of these efforts that focus on disciplinary consequences may be the most powerful message of rejection that contributes to student

disengagement from school (Felice, 1981; Wheelock & Dorman, 1988) with most of these programs having been shown to be ineffective in changing disruptive student behavior (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987). As the educational community reflects on the value or effectiveness of discipline consequences for disruptive behavior, a growing consensus in the research community has begun to explore the issue of parity in that suspension programs and other forms of disciplinary consequences are often used disproportionately among minority students (Irvine, 1990; Ogbu, 1988, 1991; Uchitelle, Bartz, & Hillman, 1988). Although discipline consequences may affect all students with less than positive results, the impact on minority students may result in even greater severe negative outcomes.

Historically, minority students on average have exhibited lower academic achievement in schools than majority students for a number of arguable reasons. Sullivan (1989) notes that punishment without meeting student needs for academic tutoring and other behavioral restructuring seldom provides motivation for reform. In a 1986 national longitudinal study, Wehlage and Rutter (1986) found that 44% of black, 31% of Hispanic/Latino and 26% of white student dropouts had been suspended or put on probation at least once before dropping out of school. Ogbu (1988, 1991) has suggested that African American students have adapted to discriminatory educational policies by disengaging from the schooling process and suggests that students of color have come to characterize striving for student success as culturally "subtractive". Additionally, many researchers have also suggested that problems of minority student misbehavior with regard to student achievement and opportunity to learn are due to the "cultural mismatch"

among teachers and students (Foster, 1990, 1993; Irvin, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas, 1991).

In addition to the disparity of discipline consequence actions, others have suggested that racist attitudes historically noted among the general population in the United States are just as common within its teacher population. Irvine (1990) suggests that as a group, white teachers are more likely than black teachers to hold negative expectations for black children, and that white teachers are more likely than black teachers to be out of "cultural sync" with the black students they teach. Generally, white teachers provide less attention to black students, less encouragement or praise, and more criticism than black teachers (Rubovitz & Maehr, 1973). It has also been suggested that problems of aggression and violence are particularly salient among racial and ethnic minority youth who are frequently poor, reside in urban areas, and are more likely to be victims of violent crime (Elliot, Heizinger and Ageton, 1985). Although some would theorize that often school suspensions of minority students are for non-contact offenses, such as "talking back to the teacher", "name calling" or use of profanity (Majors & Billson, 1992), others suggest a disproportionate involvement of minority students, particularly black males, in violent behaviors in and out of school settings (Gordon, Gordon & Nembhard, 1994).

Recent research (Samples, 1997; Sanders, 1997) exploring academic and cognitive comparisons among minority and majority students have begun to provide new insight into recent academic gains for samples of minority students. When economic backgrounds, school academic backgrounds and family support systems are comparable, little significant difference is found among academic success of minority and majority

students. Although these recent results concerning academic success are promising, the issue of behavioral incidences that directly relate to discipline and suspension disparity among majority and minority students are yet to be fully understood.

This project serves as a follow-up to an earlier study in which a team of researchers engaged in the exploration of the discipline and suspension data from a large school corporation in the Midwest (Nichols, Ludwin & Iadicola, in press). In the earlier study, a concern was raised by the local school corporation and the local media that the current data suggested that discipline and suspension incidences were possibly racially motivated in that minority students were clearly overrepresented by the data. At some school sites in the school corporation, the existing data suggested that minority students were up to ten times as likely to be suspended or expelled when compared to white students. At some school sites, virtually no students (minority or majority) had been suspended or expelled during the previous year while at other sites, up to 80% of the minority student population had experienced a suspension or expulsion consequence during the previous year. After careful analysis of the data and subsequent interviews with building administrators, the researchers concluded that the available data often contained inaccurate or flawed information with a host of behavioral incidences remaining unreported making analysis and interpretation of the data problematic at best. This project represents a review of the suspension and discipline data from this school corporation after a new data collection procedure was implemented the following year. This project also includes reports on elementary school discipline issues that were not available to the researchers during the earlier project.

Background

The school corporation under investigation for this project maintains eleven middle schools, six high schools and 35 elementary schools and is located in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. The total enrollment for grades pre-K through 12 was approximately 37,000 students (72% white, 23% black, 5% Hispanic/Latino and less than 1% Asian American or Native American). Approximately 4,100 students in this school corporation were listed as receiving free or reduced lunch and the percentage of student dropouts was reported at approximately 6%. In the previous study (Nichols, Ludwin & Iadicola, in press), middle and high school data was explored while elementary discipline data was not available to examine. This projects expands the earlier study by including data from all elementary sites in this school corporation. In addition, with the earlier study, administrators or their designee at each middle school and high site recorded behavioral incidences on a weekly basis and reported this data by way of computer to a centrally located data collection center. Do to previous flawed and inaccurate reports of discipline incidents, the SMART program (School Management and Resource Team) was initiated the following year to encourage and allow for a more complete recording of discipline data that included specific information pertaining to the level of discipline consequences that were received by students and on-site reports of building areas or "zones" where discipline problems occurred. Information available through this data management system included the student identification number, school site, the behavioral offense (36 designated misbehaviors), and the consequence (range from Level 1: Parent Conference to Level 6: Expulsion) that the student incurred for each behavioral

incidence. In addition, the system allows for coding of the specific location at each building site where the behavioral incidence occurred (Zone 1 might be the cafeteria area while Zone 2 might be the bus loading area etc.). For minor infractions i.e. Horseplay, consequence levels may range from 1 to 4 while for more severe infractions i.e. Assault, consequence levels began at level 4 (out-of-school suspension) and ranged to level 6 (expulsion). This data collection program also allowed for cross-referencing of site discipline reports by the central administration staff.

Although not the central focus of this study, in-school suspension (ISS) programs were available at virtually every school site in this school corporation. In each case, students receiving in-school suspension were removed from classes up to five days for repeated or mildly severe behavior infractions. This suspension time was typically served in a designated on-site room, isolated from the general student population that provided adult supervision and allowed for students to complete assignments before returning to their regular classes.

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) is the most severe form of consequence short of expulsion from school. School officials may suspend students for up to five days for the most severe behavior. In these cases, students were not allowed access to school grounds or extra-curricular activities and are not allowed to complete academic work they might have normally been assigned had they been attending school. As the data is presented in the results section, it should be noted that some tables represent data from "different students" meaning that data is not duplicated by multiple listings of student misbehavior while other tables present data as "students may be counted more than once" indicating

that one student may be responsible for multiple incident entries of misbehavior into the SMART system.

Results

The total number of disciplinary incidents reported by this school corporation for the year in question 1996-1997, totaled 65,507 (elementary incidents = 15,491; middle school incidents = 17,288; high school incidents = 32,728). Of this total, minority student incidents totaled 26,920 or 40% of all incidents despite the fact that minority students accounted for less than 29% of the student population. Total out-of-school suspension events were 9,559 (5,238 high school, 3,362 middle school and 959 elementary school) with 3,342 of this total attributed to minority students (approximately 35% of the student population).

Secondary and Elementary School Pattern Analysis

Table 1 indicates a three-year history of the total disciplinary events and out-of-school suspension events for middle school and high schools in the Highland School Corporation, and the most recent 1996-1997 data for elementary school sites. Note that the 1996-1997 school year was the first complete year of the implementation of the SMART program data collection system. It is also important to understand that disciplinary events per majority and minority students are listed per 100 students in that category. For example, for the 1996-1997 school year, secondary minority students represented 513.42 incidents per 100 minority students while secondary majority students

represented 250.20 incidents reported per 100 majority students with a total of 312.52 discipline incidents reported per 100 students for all students in the school corporation. The ratio of minority student incidences versus majority incidents for 1996-1997 are listed at 2.05 indicating that minority students were slightly more than twice as likely to either commit or be cited for a discipline incident when compared to majority students. Also important to note is that the 1993-1994 and 1995-1996 years of reported data were previously determined to contain flawed and unreliable data (Nichols, Ludwin & Iadicola, in press). At the completion of the first year of implementation of the SMART program in 1996-1997, central administration and site administrators suggested that the data were a more accurate reflection of actual behavioral incidents that had occurred throughout the school year and felt that the additional information available from the new data collection system (discussed later in this report) encouraged more accurate reporting than had been reported in previous years. The data for the Highland School Corporation at the secondary school level indicates preliminary movement in addressing the issue of discipline event disparity and begins to establish a base-line of information for future annual comparative exploration of the data.

Table 1 also represents similar data for total disciplinary and out-of-school suspension events at the elementary school level for the 1996-1997 school year. Again note that previous year's data were not available from elementary sites for comparative purposes. Results from Table 1 indicate similar disproportionate minority student representation within the data. Although when compared to middle and high school sites, discipline and out-of-school suspension events were less per 100 students, the minority vs majority student ratios of events are comparable to those at the secondary sites.

Correlational Patterns

Often with analysis of educational research data, it is suggested that instances of student academic success or failure are strongly connected to family socio-economic differences. This same argument might also be explored when discipline and suspension data are examined. Table 2 provides a correlation matrix comparing economic status and out-of-school suspension incidences for all Highland Community Schools students. In this table, students from lower soci-economic family units are indicated by free or reduced lunch status. This table also includes correlational patterns as they relate to the total number of reported out-of-school suspension events and the total number of students that experienced an out-of-school suspension disciplinary consequence.

Table 2 suggests that for all students of Highland, no significant correlation existed between the total out-of-school suspension events (students may be counted more than once) and reduced or free lunch status, or out-of-school suspension students and reduced or free lunch status. However, Table 2 does suggest a strong positive correlation $r = .42$ among the number of reduced or free lunch status students and minority students with the pattern significantly reversed for majority students $r = -.49$. This table also suggests that the relationship among out-of-school suspension events as well as the relationship of out-of-school suspension students is equally strong among both minority and majority students. In an effort to explore correlational patterns among different age levels, Tables 3, 4 and 5 are also provided.

Table 3 provides a correlational matrix comparing out-of-school suspension indicators at the high school level. This table indicates similar patterns that were found in

Table 2 that included all students with the exception of the absence of significant correlations among minority students and reduced or free lunch status, and the failure to find significant correlations among out-of-school suspension events and students with minority or majority students.

Tables 4 and 5 begin to show a pattern of strong correlation between out-of-school suspension events and free or reduced lunch status. Table 4 indicates that for middle school students, correlations among free and reduced lunch status and minority student status become even stronger ($r = .92$). Following this, out-of-school suspension events, and free and reduced lunch status ($r = .79$) and out-of school suspension students and free or reduced lunch status ($r = .85$) were significantly correlated. Important to note is that for majority students at the middle school level, there is a significant negative correlation among the number of out-of-school suspension students and majority status ($r = .61$), suggesting that at the middle school level, it might be uncommon for majority status students to experience out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary action, while the positive correlation of this relationship among minority students suggest that this might be a common occurrence.

Table 5 suggests a correlational matrix for out-of-school suspension patterns and socio-economic status at the elementary level. Similar to the middle school data, this table suggests a significant correlation among minority students and those qualifying for free or reduced status ($r = .69$). Again, the pattern of significant correlations among out-of-school suspension events and minority students ($r = .40$) and out-of-school suspension students and minority students ($r = .42$) is clear. Tables 4 and 5 indicate that the relationship between minority student status and qualification of free or reduced lunch

status is particularly strong at the middle school and elementary school sites. Additionally, low economic status indicated by reduced or free lunch designation is strongly related to either misbehaviors that warrant out-of-school suspension or to out-of-school suspension consequences that precipitate from the low income status of elementary and middle school students.

Consequence Analysis

Another concern with the analysis of discipline and suspension data is the issue of consequence parity when students have been identified as warranting a consequence for inappropriate behavior. Tables 6, 7 and 8 are presented to explore the average student consequence received (Level 1 - Level 6) from first-time offenders. Table 6 includes data from all elementary school sites represented as mean values for each designated behavior violation. Three major violation categories are presented (Attendance, Behavior and Law violations) along with 29 behavior subcategories. In addition, aggregate data is provided by student ethnic status. Important to note is that for some student ethnic categories (Asian, Hispanic, and Native American) and some student misbehaviors (example: Pornographic Material), limited numbers of students result in the absence of data. When enough categorical information was available for African American and Caucasian student consequences to be compared, first offenders did not differ significantly in any of the behavioral categories. Appropriate examples to observe might be the violation of Profanity/Obscenity where African American students had an average mean discipline consequence of 2.03, while Caucasian students average 2.05 on this same subcategory.

Similarly in more severe categories i.e. Possession of Stolen Property, African American and Caucasian students averaged consequences of 3.32 and 3.33 respectively.

Table 7 presents information for middle school student consequence levels using comparable behavior violation categories that were seen in the elementary school data in Table 6. Similar consistent findings were observed in Table 7 in that for behavioral violations where enough data was available for comparison purposes, first-time offending African American and Caucasian students did not differ significantly on the initial behavioral consequence that was received. Examples of these similar consequences are in the category of Possession of Narcotics or Drugs, where African American and Caucasian students received average consequences of 5.11 and 5.59 respectively and in the subcategory of Disrespect, where similar average consequences of 2.50, 2.33, 2.47, 2.78 and 3.00 were observed for African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Native American students respectively.

Table 8 presents mean consequence data for all high schools located in the Highland school district. Again, in violation categories where enough data was present, comparative analysis for first-time offenders showed no significant difference in the severity of discipline administered among ethnic group designations. Important to note in this table when compared to the elementary and middle school data in Tables 6 and 7 are the increased number of severe behavior violations i.e. Weapons Possession, Battery, Assault, Inappropriate Sexual Behavior, that were prevalent at the high school sites.

Zone Analysis

An additional advantage of the SMART program is the available data that is generated from Highland Community Schools including a site zone analysis of behavioral incidences. Tables 9-11 present data from elementary, middle and high school sites based upon the number of behavioral incidents reported (per 100 students) according to the physical zones defined by each building site.

In each case, it is no surprise that the majority of reported behavioral incidents occur in the classroom where adult supervision and documentation of problems are most prominent. In the classroom, 42, 140 and 162 student incidents were reported per 100 students at elementary, middle and high school sites respectively. Table 9 indicates that areas of prevalent behavior problems at elementary school sites tend to be in the classroom, at bus loading areas, and on the playground. At elementary sites, hallways and bus loading zones tend to be areas where minority students either commit or are observed to commit, more than twice the number of incidents reported for majority students. In the elementary classroom, minority student behavioral violations were reported as almost 61 incidents per 100 students and bus violations were reported as approximately 40 incidents per 100 students. With the exception of 3 zone areas where few behavioral incidents were reported, elementary minority students were from one, to more than two and one-half times as likely to be represented in the disciplinary data.

Table 10 indicates for all middle school students, the classroom and hallways are troublesome zones accounting for the majority of misbehavior data at 140 and 66 violations per 100 students respectively. Minority students had 207 classroom violations

per 100 students and 188 hallway incidents per hundred students at the middle school sites. The incidence of minority to majority student violations were most evident in the Fine Arts zone of the buildings (Music, Band etc.) where minority students were almost 5 times as likely to receive a disciplinary sanction when compared to majority students, and in the hallways of the school where the minority to majority student ratio was 2.75. Tables 9 and 10 indicate that seldom do ethnic majority students receive more sanctions than minority students based upon enrollment ratios of these groups.

The zone analysis of the high school disciplinary data located in Table 11 again indicates the classroom zone as an overall area of concern for all students with 162 incidents per 100 students. Minority students again are cited for more misbehaviors in this zone when compared to majority students at a rate of 229 per 100 students. In the classroom zone, minority students are more than one and one-half times as likely to be cited for rules violations when compared to majority students. The bus loading zone and career/counseling centers are also areas of concern where the minority/majority incidence ratio approaches or exceeds 2.5, or a factor of two and one-half times as great. Additional zones where minority/majority or majority/minority student ratios appear to be disproportionate (i.e. Industrial Technology: majority/minority ratio of 4.26) offer limited information for comparative purposes as a result of the few behavioral incidents cited in these locations.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest the critical need to implement effective discipline strategies early in the educational career of students. The data from this project also

support the view of many concerned educational constituencies and communities that student behavioral problems and methods to address these problems should continue to be a major thrust of teacher preparation programs, and continuing staff developmental concerns. An initial approach to addressing this issue begins with the development of reliable and valid baseline data upon which gains and losses can be more readily compared. Although not a perfect solution, the SMART data collection system begins to provide an avenue to address these concerns.

Sixty-five-thousand-five-hundred-seven disciplinary incidents in one academic year may seem at first glance, an unreasonably high number of events in a school corporation of approximately 37,000 students. Perhaps these values appear high due to the systematic and meticulous efforts of the Highland School Corporation to document and record all behavioral incidents. The documentation of disciplinary and out-of-school suspension events before the onset of the SMART program and continuing with the first complete year of data in 1996-1997 indicates that for this school system (at least at the middle and high school level), disciplinary events appear to be on the rise but in effect, may be only a reflection of improved data collection procedures. Although the ratio of minority versus majority student events appear to be on the decrease in the past three years, results suggest that continued vigilance is certainly warranted in that for all grade levels, minority students remain twice as likely to either commit or be cited for a disciplinary action and twice as likely as majority students to receive out-of-school suspensions as a disciplinary consequence. These results support the findings of several researchers (Irvine, 1990; Ogbu; 1988, 1991; Uchitelle, Bartz and Hillman, 1988) suggesting that in public schools, disciplinary consequences are often used

disproportionately among minority students. The consequences of being removed from the educational environment through the use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion serves only to further encourage academic failure along with additional negative outcomes toward the schooling process (Oppenheimer & Ziegler, 1988).

Analysis of the results from the correlational matrices begin to suggest that the relationship between soci-economic class and poor behavior of students may begin to hold some merit. The relationship between low income and poor behavior was not apparent for the Highland Community Schools as a whole or at the high school level alone, but was clearly seen at the elementary and middle school level where significant corrrelations were observed between out-of-school suspension events and economic status. The interpretation of the correlational data only becomes more problematic when observations suggest that low income status and minority student designation are only significantly correlated at the middle and elementary school level. One interpretation of the high school data could be that as students progress through their years of school, drop-out rates become more significant with high-school-age students of low income and for those students with high recidivist problem behaviors. Low income students may seek out employment for economic support, thus encouraging increased drop-out rates in high school (Steinberg, 1996), and older students by law in many states, may quit school at some time during their high school career. As students become older, the issue of being labeled as "free or reduced lunch" may also place a social stigma on some students, inhibiting the correct reporting of income information. In any case, it is clear that these issues should be addressed in the early years of a students' formal education. Minority status does appear to be significantly correlated with lower socio-economic incomes (at

least at the middle and elementary school levels) and low-income status is strongly related to increased occurrences of disciplinary sanctions as well.

For the Highland School System, disciplinary consequence sanctions appear to be parsimonious among ethnic minority and majority students. In the case of first offense sanctions, homogenous distributions of sanctions are clearly evident, with similar consequences assigned at all designated levels of violations where multiple occurrences make comparisons among ethnic groups appropriate. The discipline consequence analysis does not however address the question of the severity of consequence progression from multiple student offenses. From this data, it cannot be determined the extent to which minority or majority students progressively incur more severe consequences for repeated rules infractions, an issue that should continue to be explored in future research.

The disciplinary event zone analysis provides information that should be particularly interesting to educators as they plan future discipline programs and supervisory roles for teachers and staff. At each level of instruction, behavioral issues are most prominent (or at least observed more often) in the classroom, where adult supervision is normally present and opportunities for documentation are greatest. The high number of classroom incidents support the findings of earlier work suggesting that student misbehavior and classroom management issues continue to be a problem in public education (Mansfeld, 1991). These results suggest that continued support to faculty and staff by way of staff development and behavioral management programs are far from adequate and should be on-going.

Each school in the Highland district receives a zone analysis of reported behavioral incidents along with a similar district analysis. At elementary schools, not only discipline in the classroom is seen as an area to explore, but areas such as bus loading and playground zones are also responsible for high numbers of behavioral incidents. Questions concerning adequate supervision, "wait time" and "travel time" for students transported by buses should be issues that school systems and their transportation departments should address. These results also provide evidence to suggest that the ratio of minority versus majority student misbehavior at elementary sites is disproportionate at bus loading areas. Additional exploration might suggest that this would be expected if in turn the majority of students being bused to and from schools are from the minority population. Lower income students relying on school transportation, coupled with the earlier findings suggesting the strong relationship between minority behavioral incidences and lower income, only seem to exacerbate an already critical problem.

At the middle school sites, discipline events again appear to be important to consider in the classroom and at bus loading areas. In addition to these areas, hallway zones where behavioral problems for all students and in particular minority students are evidenced, should encourage school officials to make appropriate changes to address these issues. The middle school level is often the first opportunity for students to change classrooms on an hourly basis and the 5-10 minute hallway transition time provides an avenue for misbehavior to occur. Shortening hallway pass times or the incorporation of team teaching (where teachers rotate rather than students) and block scheduling programs

(providing longer classes with less hallway time) in the middle level years may in fact eliminate opportunities for some inappropriate behaviors to occur.

In the high school arena, the zone analysis begins to suggest that although the classroom area accounts for the majority of observed rule violations, behavioral issues become more "zone specific". Office areas, gymnasiums, and study hall areas are good examples of high violation zones for all students while Career Centers, and Time-out rooms are particular troublesome areas of concern for minority students. In similar fashion, other specific areas of the school building (Fine Arts, Home Economics, Parking Lots and Industrial Technology areas) are particular discipline areas of concern for majority students.

As with the earlier study (Nichols, Ludwin & Iadicola, in press), several concerns are warranted in making an accurate interpretation of discipline data for a large school corporation. Although administrators and staff suggest that since the implementation of the SMART program the number and severity of reported disciplinary incidences are more accurate reported, there is still no guarantee that complete data is reported from all school sites. The possibility of failing to report all discipline incidences in an effort to artificially lower discipline numbers suggesting a more positive reflection on the reporting site and staff, remains a concern. Anecdotal comments from several site administrators however suggests that the SMART program does encourage a more accurate report that provides feedback for improved monitoring of discipline incidences and location of occurrences within each building site. As long as this type of data information serves to inform the site and their staff of problems rather than serving as a

punitive comparison of "good" schools to "bad" schools, then the program at the least represents a movement in the direction of accurate reporting of discipline incidences.

An additional drawback to the analysis and interpretation of this type of data is an eventual comparative analysis among school sites that tends to be an inevitable outcome of this type of data information. These site-by-site comparisons may often be inappropriate due to factors that may encourage variability in the data. It is important to consider that a behavioral incident or office discipline report may in fact be influenced by several participants: 1) the student who engages in the alleged rule violation 2) the teacher or staff member who accuses/catches the rule violating student 3) the office staff who must process the discipline report and make an appropriate consequence decision and 4) parents who may or may not be involved in decisions of appropriate consequences based upon their availability or access to the school site. If peers or other adults are involved as "collaborators" or "victims", even greater variability in the data is potentially added. These factors may make it difficult to obtain reliable and valid data. However, in order to implement constructive, appropriate, and equitable changes designed to improve the instructional environment for all students, it remains desirable to collect accurate quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants that will hopefully result in continuous improvement.

Ideally, program changes result from a true reflection of appropriate analysis of the available data as opposed to change based upon possibly biased opinions or emotions. The SMART program along with concerted efforts of this school system, is the first step in the process of establishing a valid and reliable baseline of data information whereby they may serve all participants of the educational community. In

these efforts, school systems like Highland would be well advised to remain vigilant in monitoring and guarding against possible discriminatory practice among staff and administration in their recognition and distribution of consequences for inappropriate student misbehavior. Providing a safe and prosperous educational environment are goals that are well recognized at the national, state and local levels as essential for student success. Creating and maintaining these prosperous educational environments should also include equitable opportunities for all students to achieve success. The Highland School Corporation should be applauded in their attempts to address these types of controversial issues, and their effort is an indication of their commitment to their students and community to develop an educational environment conducive to student success and well-being.

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Table 1

Highland School Corporation Disciplinary and Out-of-School Suspension Events for Highland School Corporation (per 100 students)

	Event	Year	Minority Students	Majority Students	Total	Ratio Min./Maj.
Middle and High School Data	Total Discipline Events					
		1993-1994	302.71	131.24	170.01	2.31
		1995-1996	313.33	151.68	189.99	2.07
		1996-1997	513.42	250.20	312.52	2.05
	Out-of-School Suspensions					
		1993-1994	76.49	25.66	37.15	2.98
		1995-1996	66.43	24.30	34.29	2.73
		1996-1997	60.99	24.53	33.16	2.49
Elementary School Data						
	Total Discipline Events					
		1996-1997	145.70	75.36	98.00	1.93
	Out-of-School Suspensions					
		1996-1997	107.90	45.34	62.57	2.38

Note: The reported events may include multiple entries for some students. Data from the elementary school sites were available only for the 1996-1997 school year.

Table 2

Correlational Matix for All Highland Public School Students
Lunch Status/Disciplinary Events/Ethnic Status (1996-1997)

	Free/Reduce Lunch	OSS Events	OSS Students	Total Minor Students	Total Major Students
Free/Reduce Lunch	—				
OSS Events	-.12	—			
OSS Students	-.16	.98**	—		
Total Minor Students	.42**	.53**	.56**	—	
Total Major Students	-.49**	.59**	.67**	-.45**	—

Note: ** indicates 99% confidence level

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Table 3
Correlational Matix for Highland Community High School Students
Lunch Status/Disciplinary Events/Ethnic Status (1996-1997)

	Free/Reduce Lunch	OSS Events	OSS Students	Total Minor Students	Total Major Students
Free/Reduce Lunch	—				
OSS Events	-.48	—			
OSS Students	-.40	.98**	—		
Total Minor Students	.73	-.07	.07	—	
Total Major Students	-.88*	.50	.48	-.37	—

Note: * indicates 95% confidence, ** indicates 99% confidence level

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Table 4

Correlational Matix for FWCS Middle School Students
Lunch Status/Disciplinary Events/Ethnic Status (1996-1997)

	Free/Reduce Lunch	OSS Events	OSS Students	Total Minor Students	Total Major Students
Free/Reduce Lunch	—				
OSS Events	.84**	—			
OSS Students	.87**	.98**	—		
Total Minor Students	.92**	.79**	.85**	—	
Total Major Students	-.77**	-.56	-.61*	-.57	—

Note: * indicates 95% confidence level, ** indicates 99% confidence level

Table 5

Correlational Matix for Highland Elementary School Students
Lunch Status/Disciplinary Events/Ethnic Status (1996-1997)

	Free/Reduce Lunch	OSS Events	OSS Students	Total Minor Students	Total Major Students
Free/Reduce Lunch	—				
OSS Events	.50**	—			
OSS Students	.46**	.98**	—		
Total Minor Students	.69**	.40*	.42*	—	
Total Major Students	-.35*	.20	.29	.11	—

Note: * indicates 95% confidence level, ** indicates 99% confidence level

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Table 6

Highland Elementary Schools Average
Disciplinary Consequence Level Assigned for Rule Infractions

Level 1: Conference
Level 2: Intervention Options
Level 3: In-School Alternatives
Level 4: Out-of- School Susp.
Level 5: Alternative Programs
Level 6: Expulsion

Violation	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American
ATTENDANCE VIO.					
Attendance	1.20	0.00	1.11	1.00	1.00
BEHAVIOR VIO.					
Repeated Violations	2.24	3.00	2.34	2.21	0.00
Student Dress	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Personal Prop	1.44	0.00	1.75	1.50	0.00
Misrepresentation	2.15	0.00	2.16	2.20	0.00
Disrespect	2.00	2.70	1.98	2.30	1.33
Insubordination	2.05	2.12	2.07	2.14	2.00
Profanity/obscenity	2.03	2.36	2.05	2.70	2.00
Disruption	1.94	2.10	1.92	2.07	1.67
Threatening	2.57	0.00	2.67	2.65	2.00
Injury to Others	3.39	3.33	3.39	3.34	4.00
Improper use of tech	3.50	0.00	3.40	0.00	0.00
LAW VIOLATIONS					
Trespassing	2.67	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Poss/use of Fireworks	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Vandalism/graffiti	4.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.00
Poss stolen property	3.32	3.50	3.33	4.00	0.00
Tobacco products	3.00	0.00	3.23	0.00	0.00
Misdem theft/larceny	3.56	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Inapp sexual behavior	4.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.00
False alarms	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pornographic material	3.00	0.00	3.50	0.00	0.00
Disorderly conduct	4.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.00
Gang involvement	4.00	0.00	3.00	4.00	0.00
Battery	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Weapons	5.00	0.00	5.22	6.00	0.00
Narcotics/drugs	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Theft	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00
Illegal conduct	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
Threat illegal conduct	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00

Note : Numerical values are mean values ranging from 1 to 6.

Table 7

Highland Middle Schools Average
Disciplinary Consequence Level Assigned for Rule Infractions

Level 1: Conference
Level 2: Intervention Options
Level 3: In-School Alternatives
Level 4: Out-of- School Susp.
Level 5: Alternative Programs
Level 6: Expulsion

Violation	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American
ATTENDANCE VIO.					
Attendance	2.25	1.67	2.16	2.18	3.20
BEHAVIOR VIO.					
Repeated Violations	2.84	0.00	2.79	2.90	0.00
Student Dress	1.80	0.00	1.43	1.00	0.00
Personal Prop	2.03	0.00	1.86	1.00	0.00
Misrepresentation	2.24	0.00	2.36	0.00	0.00
Disrespect	2.50	2.33	2.47	2.78	3.00
Insubordination	2.53	2.57	2.44	2.60	3.00
Profanity/obscenity	2.76	3.00	2.74	2.93	4.00
Disruption	2.30	2.56	2.28	2.36	2.91
Threatening	3.40	4.00	3.35	3.33	0.00
Injury to Others	4.02	4.00	4.00	4.02	4.00
Improper use of tech	4.00	0.00	3.25	3.00	0.00
LAW VIOLATIONS					
Trespassing	6.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Gambling	2.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	0.00
Poss/use of Fireworks	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.00
Vandalism/graffiti	4.44	0.00	4.30	4.00	0.00
Poss stolen property	3.83	0.00	3.80	0.00	0.00
Tobacco products	3.69	0.00	3.49	3.50	0.00
Misdem theft/larceny	3.81	0.00	3.79	0.00	0.00
Electronic related	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Inapp sexual behavior	4.21	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.00
False alarms	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pornographic material	4.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
Disorderly conduct	3.50	0.00	3.53	3.00	0.00
Gang involvement	3.00	0.00	3.20	3.25	0.00
Battery	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
Weapons	5.00	6.00	6.00	5.50	0.00
Arson	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
Assault	6.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
Narcotics/drugs	5.11	0.00	5.59	6.00	0.00
Theft	5.50	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
Illegal conduct	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
Threat illegal conduct	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00

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Table 8

Highland High Schools Average
Disciplinary Consequence Level Assigned for Rule Infractions

Level 1: Conference
Level 2: Intervention Options
Level 3: In-School Alternatives
Level 4: Out-of- School Susp.
Level 5: Alternative Programs
Level 6: Expulsion

Violation	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American
ATTENDANCE VIO.					
Attendance	2.07	2.07	2.05	2.08	2.09
BEHAVIOR VIO.					
Repeated Violations	2.96	3.09	2.91	2.70	2.33
Student Dress	1.80	0.00	2.13	0.00	0.00
Personal Prop	1.39	1.00	1.25	2.00	1.00
Misrepresentation	2.50	0.00	2.25	1.86	0.00
Disrespect	2.21	2.71	2.10	2.13	2.67
Insubordination	2.31	2.12	2.23	2.29	2.61
Profanity/obscenity	2.57	2.41	2.53	2.45	2.67
Disruption	2.08	2.00	2.04	1.90	2.17
Threatening	3.63	0.00	3.48	3.83	0.00
Injury to Others	4.10	4.33	4.12	4.21	0.00
Improper use of tech	4.00	0.00	3.07	0.00	0.00
LAW VIOLATIONS					
Trespassing	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Gambling	2.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Poss/use of Fireworks	0.00	0.00	4.67	0.00	0.00
Reckless vehicle use	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Vandalism/graffiti	4.14	0.00	4.32	5.00	0.00
Poss stolen property	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Tobacco products	3.60	3.00	3.57	3.42	0.00
Misdem theft/larceny	4.22	0.00	4.12	4.00	0.00
Electronic related	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Inapp sexual behavior	4.11	4.00	4.29	4.00	0.00
False alarms	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Disorderly conduct	4.50	0.00	4.86	0.00	0.00
Gang involvement	3.27	0.00	3.33	3.00	0.00
Battery	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Weapons	5.33	0.00	5.50	0.00	0.00
Arson	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Assault	5.75	0.00	6.00	6.00	0.00
Narcotics/drugs	5.48	0.00	5.70	5.63	0.00
Theft	5.33	0.00	5.19	0.00	0.00
Firearms	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Illegal conduct	6.00	0.00	6.00	5.40	0.00
Threat illegal conduct	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00

Table 9

Highland Elementary Schools Disciplinary
Events By Corporation Zone (Per 100 Students)
(Students may be counted more than once)

Zone	Minority Students	Majority Students	Total	Ratio Min./Maj.
Bus	40.44	16.61	24.28	2.43
Cafeteria	2.69	2.07	2.27	1.30
Classroom	60.95	32.83	41.88	1.86
School Entry	0.16	0.28	0.24	1.75*
Extracurricular	0.28	0.18	0.21	1.56
Fine Arts	1.20	0.77	0.91	1.56
Grounds	3.81	2.60	3.00	1.47
Gym	3.75	1.88	2.48	1.99
Hallway	8.51	3.19	4.90	2.67
Library	0.55	0.31	0.39	1.77
Office	1.40	1.12	1.21	1.25
Parking lot	0.20	0.09	0.13	2.20
Playground	19.22	11.56	14.03	1.66
Pool	0.04	0.07	0.06	1.75*
Restroom	2.30	1.60	1.82	1.44
Stairway	0.12	0.09	0.10	1.33
Timeout	0.07	0.11	0.10	1.57*

Note: * indicates majority/minority ratio

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Table 10

Highland Middle Schools Disciplinary
Events By Corporation Zone (Per 100 Students)
(students may be counted more than once)

Zone	Minority Students	Majority Students	Total	Ratio Min./Maj.
Auditorium	0.04	0.00	0.01	---
Bus	25.44	11.92	15.98	2.13
Cafeteria	9.62	8.05	8.52	1.20
Classroom	207.18	112.36	140.80	1.84
School Entry	1.07	0.98	1.01	1.09
Extracurricular	0.24	0.19	0.21	1.26
Fine Arts	0.73	0.15	0.32	4.87
Grounds	1.71	1.11	1.29	1.54
Gym	12.70	7.03	8.73	1.81
Hallway	118.36	43.05	65.63	2.75
Home Econ.	0.39	0.86	7.12	2.21*
Indus. Tech.	0.44	0.23	0.29	1.91
Library	1.32	0.56	0.79	2.36
Office	6.20	4.02	4.67	1.54
Parking lot	0.39	0.23	0.28	1.70
Restroom	2.00	1.28	1.49	1.56
Stadium	0.00	0.10	0.07	---
Stairway	0.24	0.10	0.15	2.40
Study Hall	1.27	0.79	0.94	1.61
Timeout	0.98	1.09	1.05	0.90

Note: * indicates majority/minority ratio

Table 11

Highland High Schools Disciplinary
Events By Corporation Zone (Per 100 Students)
(students may be counted more than once)

Zone	Minority Students	Majority Students	Total	Ratio Min./Maj.
Auditorium	0.08	0.15	0.13	1.89*
Bus	4.27	1.75	2.47	2.44
Cafeteria	3.77	2.12	2.59	1.78
Career Center	2.70	1.05	1.53	2.57
Classroom	228.50	135.48	162.31	1.69
School Entry	0.53	0.93	0.81	1.75*
Extracurricular	0.23	0.46	0.40	2.00*
Fine Arts	0.30	0.80	0.66	2.67*
Grounds	2.02	1.82	1.87	1.11
Gym	10.32	7.49	8.31	1.38
Hallway	9.22	4.28	5.70	2.15
Home Econ.	0.50	1.93	1.52	3.86*
Indus. Tech.	0.42	1.79	1.40	4.26*
Library	0.95	0.48	0.62	1.98
Office	160.15	149.67	152.69	1.07
Parking lot	1.10	4.03	3.19	3.66*
Pool	0.08	0.29	0.23	3.63*
Restroom	0.80	1.12	1.03	1.40*
Stadium	0.11	0.09	0.10	1.22
Stairway	0.08	0.06	0.07	1.33
Study Hall	11.77	11.68	11.70	1.01
Time out	0.19	0.03	0.08	6.33
Weight Room	0.38	0.25	0.29	1.52

Note: * indicates majority/minority ratio

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